

Anyone familiar with *Zamenis mucosus* in India, a very common snake, would mistake the Chinese *Z. dhumnades* for it, as I did myself. The similarity in the two species in growth, bodily conformation, relative length of tail to body, in every scale peculiarity, as well as in colour and markings is very striking. Only careful attention to lepidosis would show the distinction between the two.

A reference to Mr. Boulenger's Catalogue (Vol. I, pp. 374 and 379) shows that there is an extremely close agreement in the characters of the genera *Zamenis* and *Zaocys*, in fact, the one point of difference one can discover is that the maxillary teeth in the former vary from 12 to 20, whereas in the latter they range from 20 to 33. Now I have six skulls of *Zamenis mucosus* in my collection and find that the maxillary teeth number from 20 to 24, so that the dentition on Mr. Boulenger's representation accords with that of *Zaocys* rather than *Zamenis*. I have skulls also of *Zaocys dhumnades* and *Z. nigromarginatus* which when compared critically with those of *Zamenis mucosus* reveal no differences that justify their being referred to different genera. The dentition of the three species is as follows:—

Species.	maxillary.	palatine.	pterygoid.	mandibular.
<i>Z. mucosus</i>	20—24	14—18	21—24	17—22
<i>Z. dhumnades</i>	23—25	19—20	25	25—26
<i>Z. nigromarginatus</i> ..	24—27	18—19	20—21	21—25
<i>Z. tenasserimensis</i> ..	26

I think hardly any herpetologist will disagree with my opinion on the fact herein specified, that *Zamenis mucosus* should, in future, be known as *Zaocys mucosus*.

The change of an old established name for a common species with which we have grown familiar, is regrettable from every point of view. The fault lies with our systematists however, who group together species whose position is dubious, without even placing a query after the generic name. If skull characters are to be made the basis of classification then no systematist should fix the Genus of any species until he has skulls of every species.

Where skulls are not available, the generic name should be given dubiously in the text books which are supposed to guide us.

F. WALL, C.M.Z.S., F.L.S.,
MAJOR, I.M.S.

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No. XXXIII.—ARE THE SNAKES *OLIGODON TRAVANCORICUS* (BEDDOME), AND *O. VENUSTUS* (JERDON) ENTITLED TO SPECIFIC DISTINCTION ?

Whilst examining snakes in the British Museum collection in 1912 I was much struck with the close resemblance between specimens of Beddome's